TREES OF NOTE IN CONNECTICUT

COMPILED BY KATHARINE MATTHIES

917.46
M44

OLIVER ELLSWORTH ELMS *WINDSOR*

It was a custom during the period just after the American Revolution to plant thirteen trees to commemorate the original Colonies. Oliver Ellsworth planted thirteen elms at his home in Windsor of which these two are all that remain.

TREES OF NOTE IN CONNECTICUT

COMPILED BY KATHARINE MATTHIES

For the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution

1934

QK
484
C6
M3
1934

Copyright 1934 by the Connecticut Daughters
of the American Revolution, Inc.
Printed in the United States of America

TO
EMELINE A. STREET, STATE REGENT
1932–1936

72929

PREFACE

IT was originally planned to call this book "Historic Trees in Connecticut," but there are so few trees that are really historic that it seems best to give it its present title. The trees here included are noted for their size, beauty, or age, or some incident connected with their history. There are, doubtless, a number of trees which should be mentioned in this book but which have not come to my attention and I should be glad to learn of them.

The grouping of the trees is by counties in order that they may be more easily located on the map in the back of the book.

Trees of more recent interest, such as the Washington Bicentennial Trees, have not been included as their number is legion, Connecticut Daughters alone having planted over six thousand trees in honor of the Father of His Country. Two of these trees—elms—were planted by the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution at the Washington Entrance to the Connecticut Arboretum at Connecticut College in New London.

Another Bicentennial tree is the "Washington Elm Grandchild," a descendant of the Elm at Cambridge, Massachusetts, under which Washington took command of the American troops. This tree was a gift of the Maryland Daughters of the American Revolution and was planted on the grounds of the State Capitol in Hartford on March 31, 1933. The elm was accepted by the Governor for the State, and, having been given good care, is in excellent condition.

I wish to acknowledge here with grateful appreciation the work of Mrs. J. E. Jeffrey, my predecessor, who began gathering this material; the information and pictures sent in by various Chapters and individuals; and the assistance of several friends who aided me in searching for material, compiling it and in proofreading. The map is the work of Miss Lucie L. Oliver of New Haven to whom I extend my sincere thanks for this very worth-while addition to the book. I am also indebted to Mr. George S. Godard, State Librarian, and his Secretary who gave me the material on the Constitutional Oaks and to Mr.

Allen B. Cook of the Forest and Park Commission who gave me data on the size of some of the trees.

The following pictures were contributed as noted: Oliver Ellsworth Elms by a member of the Abigail Wolcott Ellsworth Chapter as was the Windsor Hunting Tree; all Litchfield trees by a member of the Mary Floyd Tallmadge Chapter; John Brown's tree by a D.A.R. member; 1812 Oak of Watertown by a member of the Sarah Whitman Trumbull Chapter; Revolutionary Sycamore of Danbury by the Mary Wooster Chapter; Ye Old Oak, Easton, by Mrs. J. Arthur Sherwood; Witch Elm, Hartford, by a member of the Ruth Wyllys Chapter; Westport Oak by Compo Hill Chapter; Hequetch Sycamore, Stamford, by Mrs. James S. Kline; Four Sisters Elms, New London, by Mr. Edward Eggleston; and Giant Oak, West Ashford, by a member of the Elizabeth Porter Putnam Chapter. The pictures of the Sharon Elms were taken by Mr. George M. Marckres. The picture of the Seymour Chestnut was copied from Sharpe's Seymour, Past and Present; *the picture of the Franklin Elm in New Haven was copied from the* History of New Haven County *Vol. I, published by The Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, and the picture of the Charter Oak was copied from the cover of* The Story of the Charter Oak *compiled by Jewell Marshall. The picture of the Cedar Sentinel, Saybrook, was copied from* The Story of Connecticut *by Lewis Sprague Mills. All other pictures are photographs taken by myself.*

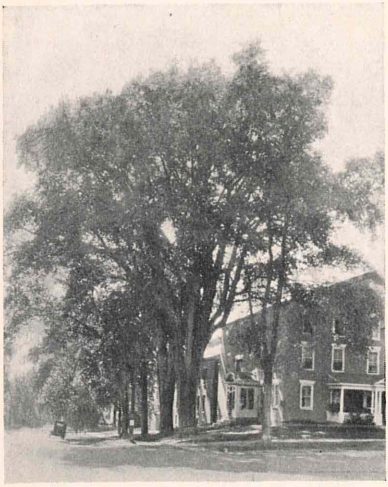
KATHARINE MATTHIES

State Chairman, Conservation and Thrift,
Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution.

1934.

Trees of Note in Connecticut

LITCHFIELD COUNTY



Whipping Post Elm, Litchfield.

This tree, standing at the corner of North and West Streets, near the county jail, was used as the whipping post as late as 1815. When the official whippings took place, the tree was small enough so that the culprit's arms stretched around it and his hands were tied together. It now has a circumference of eleven feet, nine inches, at a height of four feet above the ground.

Revolutionary Oak
McKinley Oak } *Litchfield.*

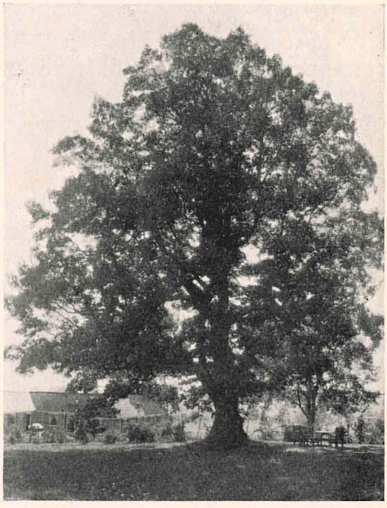
These oaks were planted in East Park by the Mary Floyd Tallmadge Chapter, D.A.R., one in memory of Litchfield's Revolutionary Soldiers and the other in memory of President William McKinley, a great lover of trees.

Colvorcoresses Oak, Litchfield.

This tree was planted in East Park in commemoration of the return of Rear Admiral George P. Colvorcoresses from the battle of Manila Bay, where he was Executive Officer on Dewey's flagship.

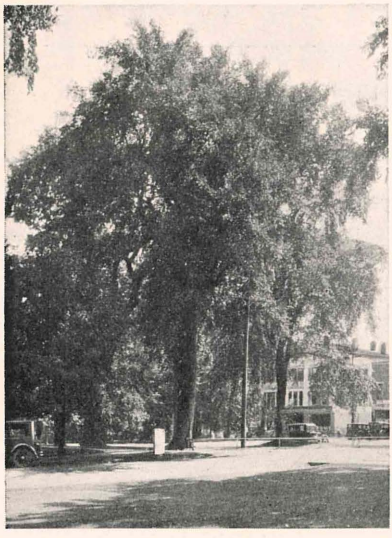
Lincoln Oak, Litchfield.

Grown from an acorn from a tree at Lincoln's grave in Springfield, Illinois, this oak was planted in front of the library as part of the Bicentennial Celebration of the town in 1920.



Primeval Oak, Litchfield.

This tree, standing near Mrs. Babbitt's house, is said to be a real primeval oak under which the last bear roaming at large in Litchfield was killed.



Sign Post Elm, Litchfield.

This elm was used as the town sign post for many years after the settlement of the town in 1720. It stands at the corner of East and South Streets.

1812 *Elms, Litchfield.*

These were planted by soldiers stationed at the former Cables place during the War of 1812. They are found on the continuation of West Street.

**Old Apple Tree, Litchfield.*

Barber, in his *Historical Collections*, mentions an apple tree which stood on the farm of Solomon Marsh. The tree was supposed to be one hundred and sixteen years old in 1838 and was in vigorous condition, having borne in 1835 one hundred bushels of fine quality apples. The circumference of its trunk at two feet from the ground was eleven feet, five inches, and the circumference of its branches was nearly eleven rods in extent.

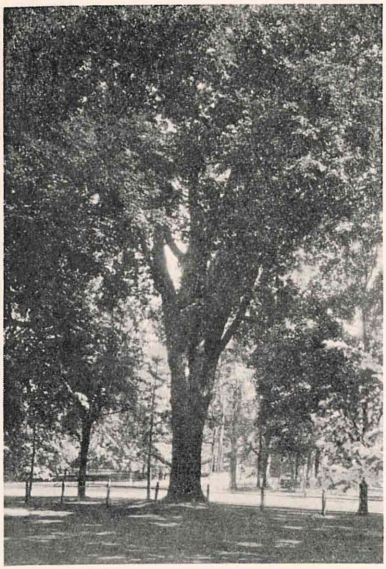
**Revolutionary Apple Trees and Pine Tree, Litchfield.*

Oliver Wolcott (1726–1797) lived on South Street and was one of the most prominent citizens of the town. He held many offices and was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Governor of Connecticut. General Washington spent a night at the Governor's Mansion. A statue of George III was torn down by the Sons of Liberty on Bowling Green, New York City, and Oliver Wolcott had it transported to Litchfield, where it was melted down and made into bullets in the Wolcott Orchard by Madam Wolcott and her neighbors.

Connecticut Sycamore, Litchfield.

It stands in front of the Catholic Church and is the last one of the thirteen sycamores planted by Oliver Wolcott and named for the original Colonies. This is the one named for Connecticut.

*Denotes trees no longer standing.



Beecher Elm, Litchfield.

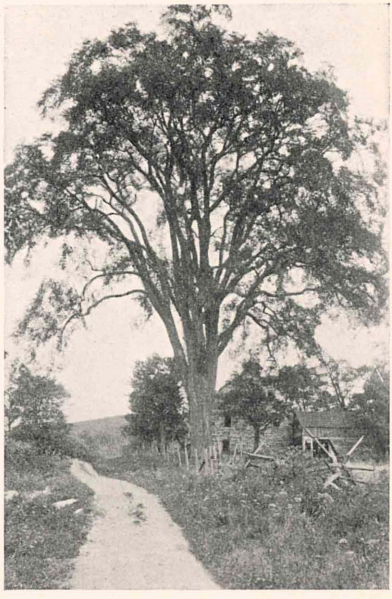
This elm stands at the corner of North and Prospect Streets, near the site of the Lyman Beecher House. Lyman Beecher was the Congregational minister in Litchfield from 1810 to 1824 and was the father of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Seven of his sons became Congregational ministers.

**Indian Apple Orchard, Woodbury.*

The Indians planted orchards and built corn-stalls on their reservations after most of their lands were sold. A deed executed by them in 1733 mentions "Cockshure's Island" near Pootatuck Village, and "Mancheere's Cornstall." This orchard is mentioned in the deed and other old instruments as "the old orchard," and was used as a council place. Thirteen of the trees were bearing fruit in July, 1853.

The Sterling Elm, Sharon.

This beautiful tree measured seventeen feet in circumference with a spread of one hundred and ten feet, in 1872.



The Sentinel Elm, Sharon.

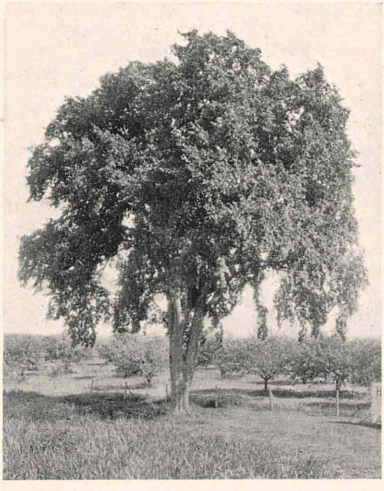
The Sentinel is so called because it stands near the old stone house in Gay Street, which tradition said was used as a hiding place for arms and ammunition during the American Revolution.

Calhoun Elm, Litchfield.

John C. Calhoun planted this tree on Prospect Street when he was a student at the Litchfield Law School, kept by Tapping Reeve, the first law school in the United States.

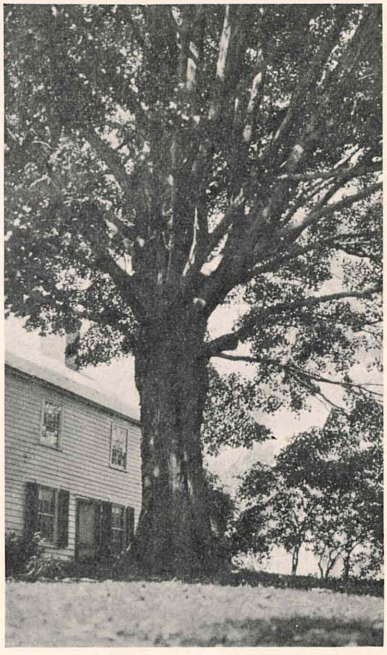
**First Elm, Woodbury.*

Reuben Walker planted a sapling which he had used as a whip to drive his horse from Stratford to Woodbury. It was the first elm ever set out in Woodbury and grew into an enormous tree, well known to the inhabitants of the town, but it was struck and killed by lightning many years ago.



Harris Elm, Litchfield.

This tree marks the place where Joseph Harris, a respectable inhabitant, was attacked by Indians in 1723 while working in the fields. He was killed and buried at the foot of a large elm of which the present tree is supposed to be a descendant.



Cogswell Maple, New Preston.

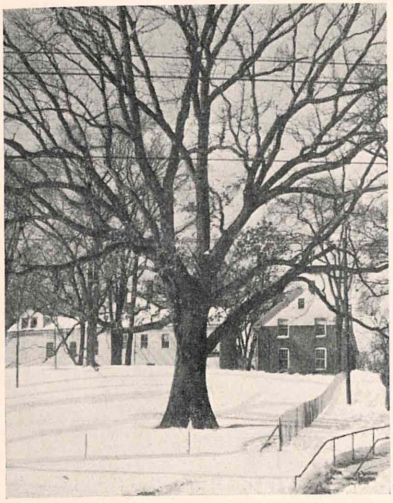
This is said to be the largest maple in Connecticut. It is on the property owned by Judge Walter M. Pickett, a lineal descendant of Major William Cogswell. The house on this property was once an inn where George Washington was entertained on one of his trips to Connecticut.

Centennial Horse Chestnut, Litchfield.

This tree was planted in front of the former Lord House in 1876 as a Centennial Tree.

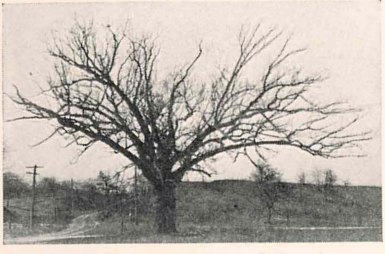
Horace Bushnell Elm, Bantam.

Horace Bushnell, an eminent divine, was born in a house near this elm, which was planted in his honor.



1812 *Oak, Watertown.*

The first unfurling of the American flag took place under the old oak tree at the foot of Post Office Hill on December 24, 1814.

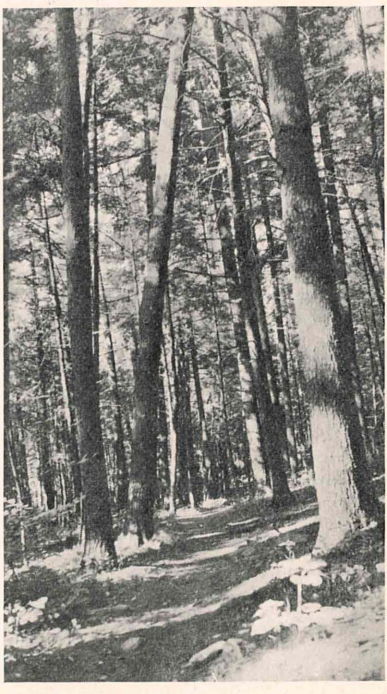


White Oak, Gaylordsville.

This tree is over two hundred years old and stands near the Schaghticoke Trail. Tradition says that George Washington held council under this tree when on his way to Hartford in September, 1780. The Oak is in the possession of the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution who are caring for it. The tree circumference is seventeen feet, four inches.

Tiffany Elm, Hartland.

This elm stands on the farm formerly owned by Consider Tiffany but now the property of Mrs. Clarence Snow. It is said to be the second largest elm in Connecticut and was planted by Mr. Tiffany to shade his well.

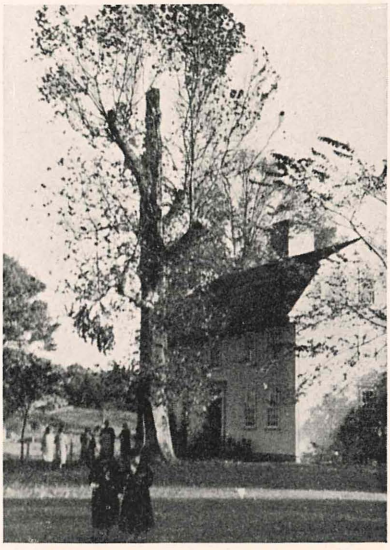


Cathedral Pines, Cornwall.

The United States Geological Survey said of these well-known pines that they are the "finest bit of original forest in the Eastern States, and not surpassed in the Lake States." Their maximum height in 1922 was about one hundred and twenty-five feet. They have been in the possession of the Calhoun family for over two hundred years.

**John Brown's Tree, Barkhamsted.*

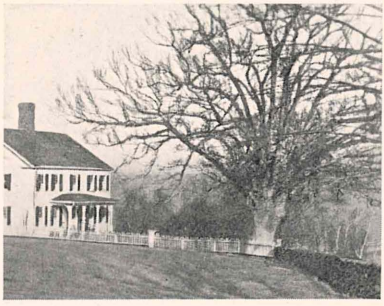
The tablet on the tree read: "This ancient white oak was named when John Brown 'whose soul is marching on' played under it as a tiny child, and called it 'my tree.' " John never forgot this tree and came to it on each of his trips to Connecticut. The oak had previous historic interest for it was a council tree of the local Indians. John Brown was born in 1800 in the neighboring town of Torrington.



Glebe House Sycamore, Woodbury.

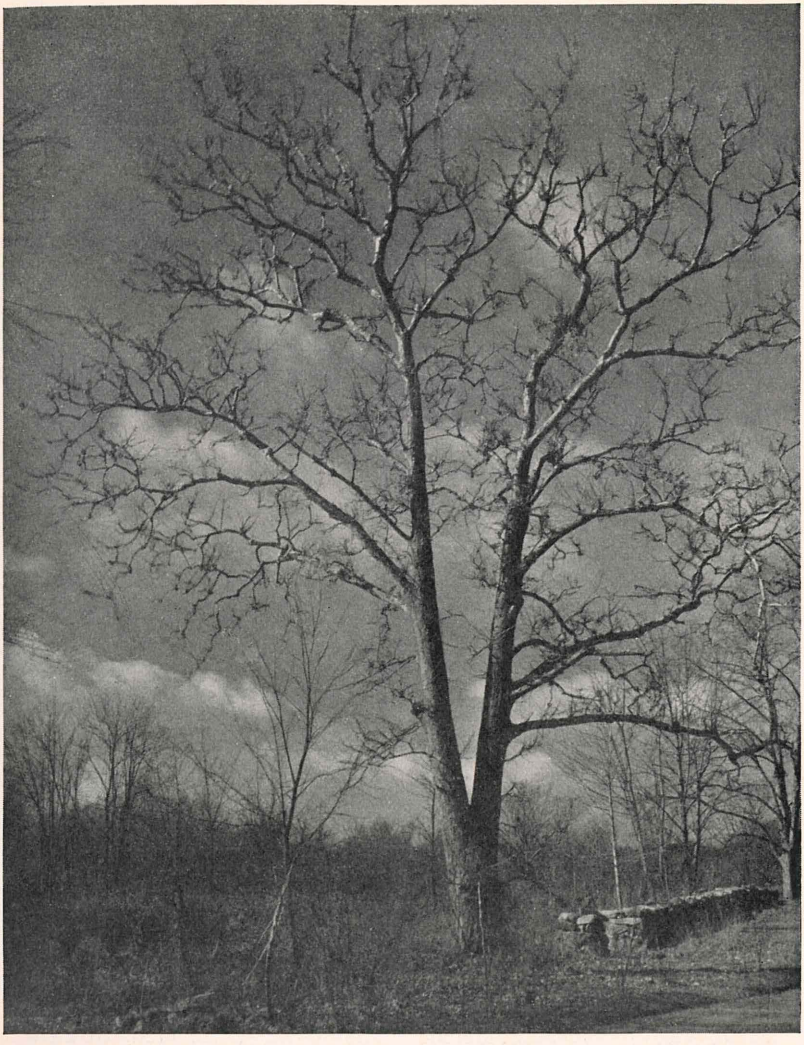
This very large, old sycamore without a doubt nodded its approval of the selection of Samuel Seabury as the first Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, which took place in the Glebe House in 1783.

FAIRFIELD COUNTY



Ye Old Oak, Easton.

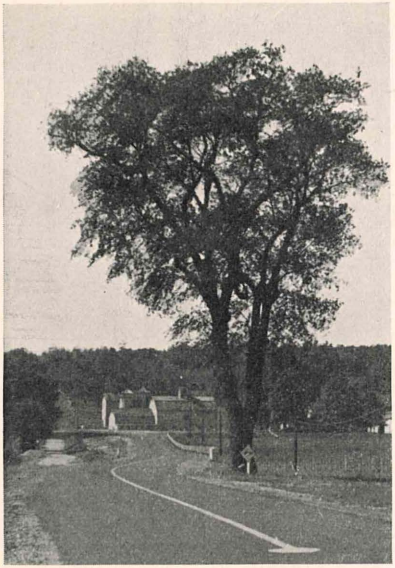
This tree is a white oak which stands on the lawn in front of the house built by Isaac Bennett in 1730. When the tree had grown to some size the center was cut out for a bush harrow which accounts for the wide spread of the branches, and every other year it has bushels of acorns. The Homestead which has been in the Bennett and Seeley families for four generations was willed in 1925 by the great-great-granddaughter of Isaac Bennett to Mrs. J. Arthur Sherwood. Age of tree about three hundred years. Circumference sixteen and one half feet. Spread one hundred and twenty-five feet.



HEQUETCH SYCAMORE *STAMFORD*

This tree stands on ground which was the planting ground reserved for the Indians in their first deed to the white men at Stamford although later in 1667 the Indians also gave this planting ground to the white settlers. The original deed conveying it, and signed by the Indians, is in the custody of the Town Clerk. The land was known as "Hequetch" and now belongs to Mrs. James S. Kline.

72929



Black Cherry, Brookfield.

This tree was recently saved from destruction when a new road was put through. Its circumference is eleven feet with a spread of sixty feet and a height of seventy-five feet. It stands on the road from Brookfield Center to "Joyce's Corner."

Napoleon Willow Grandchild, Fairfield.

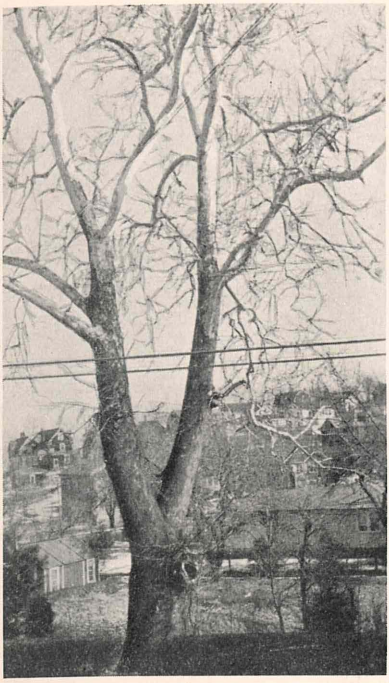
A willow, which became a favorite of Napoleon's, was planted on St. Helena by the Governor of the Island. Captain Sheffield of Fairfield once stopped at St. Helena and brought home several willow cuttings. One grew into a beautiful big tree which was blown down in a thundershower in 1901. The present willow came from a cutting of the Sheffield tree and is a grandchild of the St. Helena willow. It stands on the property of Egbert Hadley, Harbor Road, Southport.

**Arnold Tamarack, Ridgefield.*

Five hundred patriots under General Benedict Arnold built a hasty barricade and fought the British troops under General Tryon as they returned from Danbury. Arnold barely escaped death. A tamarack for many years marked the spot where his horse fell under him, but it has been replaced by a spruce tree.

Oldest Inhabitant, Fairfield.

An oak standing on Greenfield Hill above the Pequot Swamp witnessed the battle there. It sheltered the red men and watched the coming of the white men. In 1778 a band of Redcoats, encamped under the oak, made their plans to destroy the property of the village and in 1790 the ministers of the Established Religion in Connecticut met with Dr. Timothy Dwight near this tree when it listened to many learned addresses. It now stands as a guardian by the gateway of Rosemore.

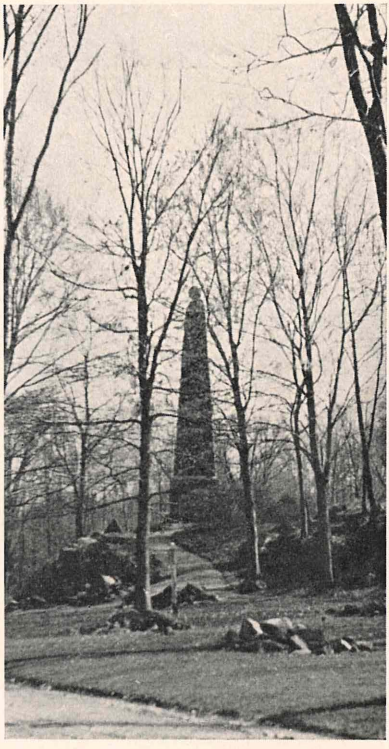


Revolutionary Sycamore, Danbury.

This sycamore was standing at the time of the settlement of Danbury in 1685 and marked the west boundary of the town on West Wooster Street. It witnessed the retreat of the British to Ridgefield after they had burned Danbury.

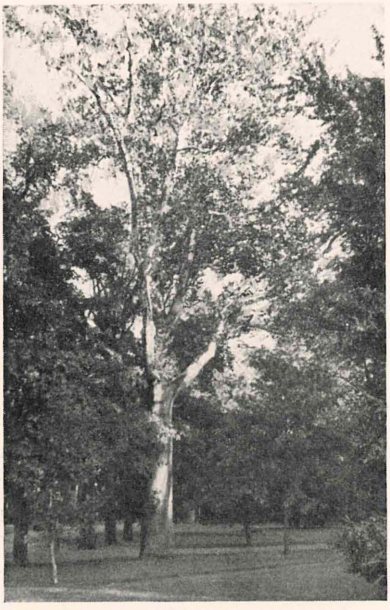
**Old Oak, Stratford.*

This was an ancient tree, estimated to be about four hundred years of age when a strong gale blew it down in 1884. It is probable that Colonel John Burr purchased land from the Indians under this tree. He held council with them and for nearly two hundred years he and his descendants owned the land on which this tree stood.



Scion of the Charter Oak, Redding.

This tree (which is the small one to the left in the picture) stands in the Israel Putnam Memorial Camp Ground. The marker near this tree reads: "Charter Oak. A Chip of the Old Block. This tree sprang from an acorn of the famous Charter Oak of Hartford in which the Charter of Connecticut was hidden when Sir Edmund Andros, the Royal Governor threatened the Liberties of the people." There is another scion of the Charter Oak, in Bushnell Park Hartford, and numerous other descendants may be found in the State.

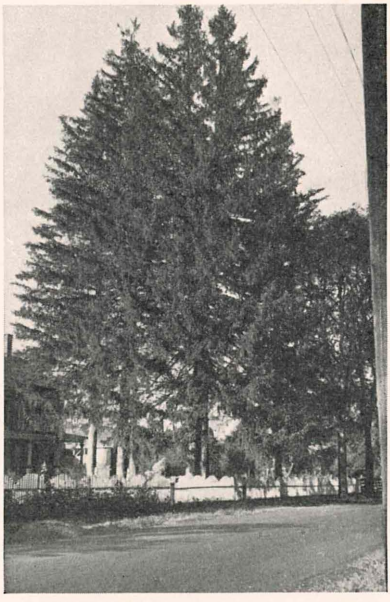


1812 *Sycamore, Fairfield.*

This sycamore has a diameter of six feet and a circumference of twenty feet at its base, with a spread of branches of one hundred feet and a height of one hundred feet. It branches at twenty feet from the ground. In 1815 a "Peace Feast" to celebrate the end of the War of 1812 was held in Fairfield and an ox was barbecued under the tree. The sycamore is still standing in a flourishing condition.

Pequot Beeches, Fairfield.

The Pequots made their last stand against the white man in 1637 in the Pequot Swamp. Fairfield was settled after the battle. Only a portion of the swamp remains on the Hawkins property on Center Street south of the Post Road. The present beeches are descendants of the ones which grew here in the seventeenth century.

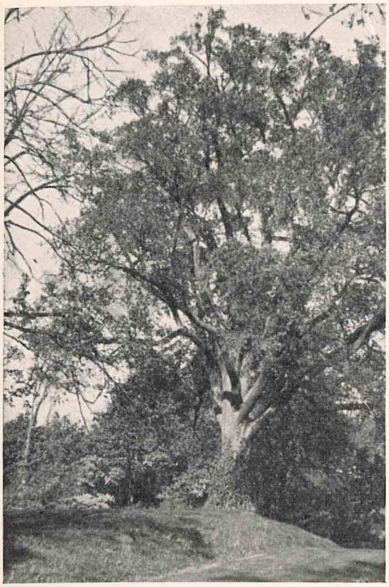


Nichols' Spruces, Lyons Plains (Redding).

These six trees can never be destroyed by man according to the provisions of the deeds which have been given to each owner of the property, since the first owner, Ebenezer Nichols, planted the trees ninety years ago. The property is now owned by O. B. Lyons and the trees are some of the finest specimens of spruce to be found in the state.

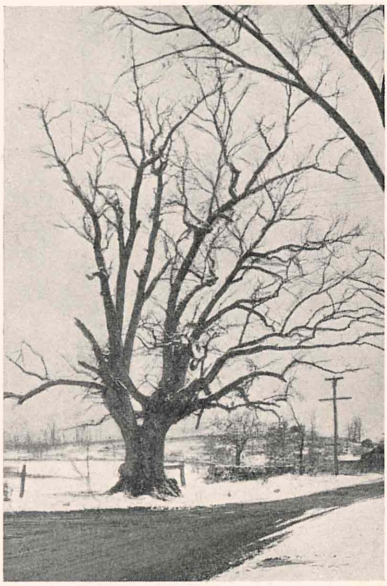
Hequetch Sycamore, Stamford.

Emerson refers to the sycamore or buttonwood as "the largest, grandest, and loftiest deciduous tree in America." This particular sycamore is about three feet in diameter and seventy-five feet in height and may be one hundred and fifty years old. The land on which this tree stands is known as "Hequetch."



Revolutionary Elm, Redding.

On the site near the elm stood the house of the Widow Sanford where the Continental officers banqueted in 1779. It has a girth of thirty feet, six inches, at a height of one foot above the ground. Its branches have a spread of one hundred and twelve feet.



Oak, Westport.

This oak stands at the corner of Compo Road and Gorham Avenue on the route taken by the British on their march to Danbury. This march took place between April 25th and 28th, 1777, when Tryon raided many places in and near Danbury.

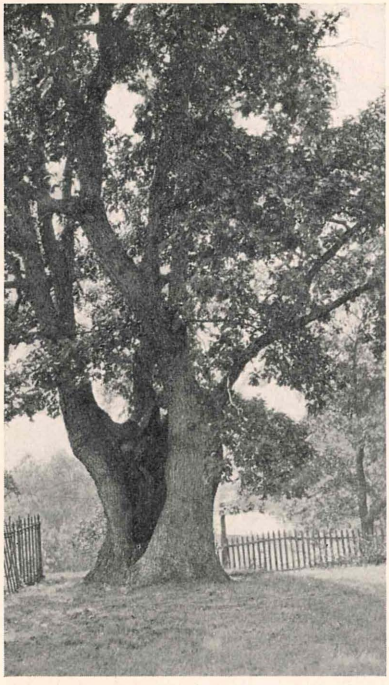
NEW HAVEN COUNTY

**Pierpont Elms, New Haven.*

Mrs. Eldred, an original proprietor, had not come to this country so her lot had never been used. The church took the lot for a house for Rev. James Pierpont and people were asked to make a freewill offering toward building the house. William Cooper brought two elms which he planted in front of this house at the corner of Temple and Elm Streets. The intellectual Jonathan Edwards courted the charming Sarah Pierpont under these trees and here the "silver tongued" Whitfield preached from a platform built under their branches. The last of the Pierpont Elms was cut down in 1840 when it had grown to eighteen feet in circumference.

**Woodbridge Oak, Savin Rock.*

On this tree on July 4, 1779, a lantern was hung to warn of the approach of the British.



Cemetery Oak, Derby.

This hollow tree stands at the southwestern end of the Colonial Cemetery and is said to be the oldest tree in Derby. There are two old gravestones in the hollow of the trunk.

**Mighty Oak, New Haven.*

This "mighty oak" once stood at what is now the corner of Chapel and George Streets but in 1638 it was on the Widow Hannah Beecher's lot near the inlet where the settlers landed. It was under this oak that the planters gathered to hear Rev. John Davenport on their first Lord's Day in New Haven. The stump of the tree was used to hold the anvils of Nathaniel Beecher and of his grandson, David.

**Herrick Elms, New Haven.*

These magnificent elms stood in front of the house and school of the Rev. Claudius Herrick where Battell Chapel now stands. They were one hundred and fifty years old when cut down in 1879.

**Fellowes Oak, New Haven.*

This oak stood on the Green, north of Trinity Church, and was imported from England by Richard S. Fellowes.

Mulberry Tree, Guilford.

In 1760 half an ounce of mulberry seed was sent to each parish in the state to encourage the raising of silkworms for the production of silk. A number of these trees in Guilford gave Mulberry Point its name. But one of the trees remains. Incidentally, Guilford was the first town to set the example of care for trees when in 1646 she forbade anyone to cut down trees in front of the meetinghouse.

White Oak on Cooke Hill, Wallingford.

Cooke Hill was settled by Samuel Cooke. The tree is over two hundred years old and has a circumference of sixteen feet with a spread to the north of fifty-eight feet and to the south of fifty-two feet, a total spread of one hundred and ten feet.

**Sentinel Oak, Derby.*

The Sentinel Oak stood on the brow of Sentinel Hill, where sentinels were stationed at the time of Tryon's invasion of Connecticut during the Revolution. From this spot can be seen much of Long Island Sound and the watchers could easily see and give the alarm if British ships entered the mouth of the Housatonic River.

Great Elm Planting, New Haven.

The Common Council ordered the planting of the elms in September, 1784, and this order was approved at a city meeting on June 5, 1787. The elms were planted on Hillhouse Avenue in 1792. Colonel James Hillhouse asked the citizens in 1787 to subscribe various amounts for planting elms to beautify the Green, which planting lasted until 1796.

**Naugatuck Hemlock, Seymour.*

Tradition says "Naugatuck" means one big tree and further states that there was a large hemlock near the falls in Seymour, from which tree the place was called Naugatuck by the Indians.

**Nathan Beers Elm, New Haven.*

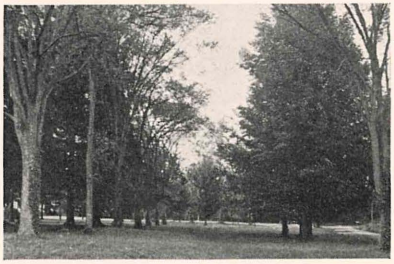
The elm was named in honor of Nathan Beers, a patriarch of the American Revolution. It was one hundred feet in height and stood at the corner of Grove Street and Hillhouse Avenue.

Johnson Oak, Northford.

The property on which the oak stands was purchased by Nathaniel Johnson from Thomas and Martha Mulliner in 1714. It remained in the Johnson family until 1916, since which time it has often changed hands. The tree was saved from destruction in 1931 when the course of the state road was changed at the request of the town. The measurements of the tree in 1800 were as follows: circumference of trunk, thirty feet; branch spread, east and west one hundred and eleven feet, north and south one hundred and seven feet. Its estimated age is over two hundred years.

Indian Tree, Oxford.

This is a massive elm with very large branches, and is of great age. It served as the boundary between the Indians of Chusetown (now Seymour) and those of Woodbury. The elm stands at the north entrance of the Washburn property.



Election Grove, Woodbridge.

The Rev. S. B. Marvin asked each man to plant a tree on the Church Green before he cast his ballot in 1865. Ninety such trees were brought which make a pretty grove near the church today.

*1812 *Apple Tree, Meriden.*

A very large, low-growing, wide-spreading apple tree stood upon Britannia Street in 1812, with its lower branches touching the stonewall underneath it. A captain drilling soldiers saw his men march up into the tree and seat themselves. He ordered the men remaining in the road to shoot the men in the tree but they refrained from doing so.

**Herrick Oak, New Haven.*

This scarlet oak was planted on the Yale College Campus by E. C. Herrick to commemorate the spot where his father, Claudius Herrick, was born.

**White Oak, Southbury.*

The first explorers of Woodbury encamped beneath the spreading branches of a great white oak which gives the northern sections of Southbury the name White Oak. The trunk of the tree lived for many years after the limbs had broken off but finally fell from decay in 1808. Pieces of the trunk were saved.

Great Oak, Double Beach, Branford.

This huge old tree was a landmark and council tree at the time of the settlement of Branford in 1640.

**Franklin Elm, New Haven.*

This elm stood at the corner of Church and Chapel Streets. It was brought in from Hamden Plains by Jerry Allen who, after several ineffectual attempts to sell the tree for cash, made a trade with Thaddeus Beecher who had a store on Exchange Corner. It was called the Franklin Elm because it was planted on April 17, 1790, the day that Benjamin Franklin died. The elm had a girth of sixteen feet at two feet from the ground and its height was eighty feet.

**Chestnut Tree, Seymour.*

This tree on Rimmon Hill at the corner near the Carrington property was a fine specimen of a chestnut with wide-spreading branches. Its circumference was twenty-six feet and it increased in size at the rate of three feet in thirty years.

**Benham Black Walnut, Meriden.*

There once stood a large black walnut tree, rare in this section, in front of the old Benham house at the foot of Anne Street.

**Derby Narrows Elm, Derby.*

A large, very old elm used to stand in front of the Leman Stone "Castle" in Derby Narrows. The tree was spared when the railroad was built and it stood so near the track that a passenger could touch it from the car window. Many important business transactions doubtless took place under its shade, for the "Castle" was used as a storehouse and center of Housatonic River shipping.

**Bakewell Elm, New Haven.*

This elm was so called because it was especially admired by Robert Bakewell, an English artist who illustrated the scientific works of Professor Silliman.

Roosevelt Oak, East Haven.

This tree presented by President Theodore Roosevelt was planted on Arbor Day, May 1, 1908, to mark the site where General Lafayette encamped on the Green.

HARTFORD COUNTY

Farmington Elms, Farmington.

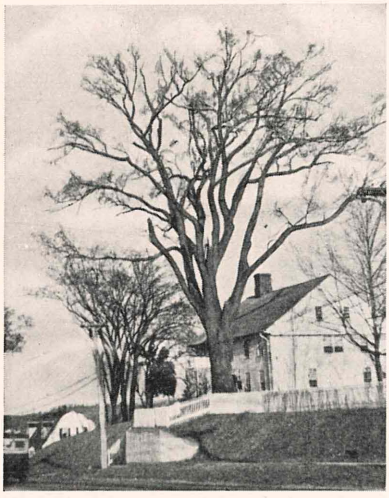
Sylvanus Curtis and Phineas Lewis, in 1762, a year after Sylvanus had married, brought three elm trees home from a swamp. One was planted in front of Mr. Curtis' home, one in back of the Elm Tree Inn, and the third died. The Elm Tree Inn is probably the oldest inn open continuously as such in the United States since 1660 or 1670. Much of the original inn remains although the entire front is new. George Washington had dinner at this inn on May 19, 1781. There is but a stump of the tree at the Inn left.

Canoe Birch, Warehouse Point.

This birch stands on the property of Mr. F. A. Hamilton. Its circumference is eight feet, five inches, at a height of four feet from the ground; its spread is seventy-three feet; and its height, seventy-five feet.

**Judd Elm, New Britain.*

Five generations of Judds lived in the home on West Main Street and a descendant of John Judd, when a boy, planted an elm to designate the place. This tree grew to be very large and beautiful before it was cut down.



Sarah Whitman Hooker Elm, West Hartford.

The Sarah Whitman Hooker house which was standing as early as 1763 came into the possession of the Hookers in 1773. Mrs. Hooker guarded two British officers, prisoners of war, in 1775 at the orders of the General Assembly of Connecticut. These officers stayed with Mrs. Hooker nearly a year. The elm, said to be over two hundred and fifty years old, was planted in front of the house by Bristol, a slave of the Hooker family, who was later given his freedom by them. The paper granting his freedom is still in existence. The elm is the fourth largest in the state and its measurements in 1933 were: circumference at one foot from the ground, twenty-three feet, nine inches; at four and one half feet from the ground, seventeen feet, four inches; diameter at four and one half feet from the ground, five feet, six and one half inches; spread of branches, sixty-five feet; and height, ninety feet.

**Mortimer Sycamores, Middletown.*

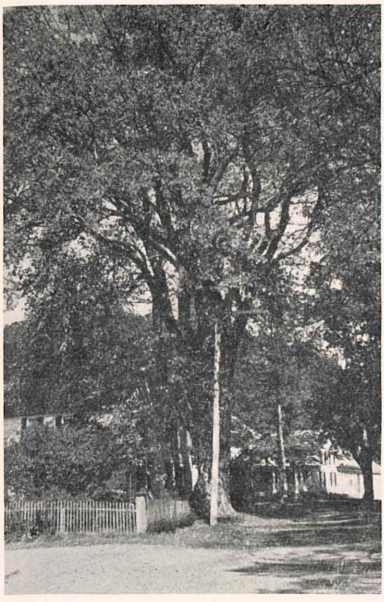
An avenue of sycamores extended from North Main Street through the Philip Mortimer property to the banks of the Connecticut River. A detachment of French troops stopped there and danced under the trees, on which they carved the names of Washington and Lafayette. Both the sycamores and the house are gone.

**Eno Elm, Simsbury.*

The Elizur Eno House, on the continuation of a street called Westover Plain, was built in 1750. It was sheltered by a mammoth elm of great age and beauty. French officers were quartered in this house at one time. They had a quarrel and one threw his carving knife, making a gash in the wall which is still visible.

Great Elm, Wethersfield.

This beautiful and well-known landmark stands on the east side of the Broad Street Green and the sign on it reads as follows: "The Great Elm. 9 ft., 6 in. in diameter. 29 ft. 6 in. circumference. Age 172 years. 1930." Tradition has it that Charles Wesley preached under this elm in 1750.



Elm, Canton.

This beautiful old elm stands in front of Elmshade at the head of the Green. It is nearly the size of the Wethersfield Elm. Moses Dyer, who owned Elmshade and who died at the age of ninety-five in 1898, stated that the elm was a good-sized tree when the house was built in 1784.

**Mix Pine Tree, Bristol.*

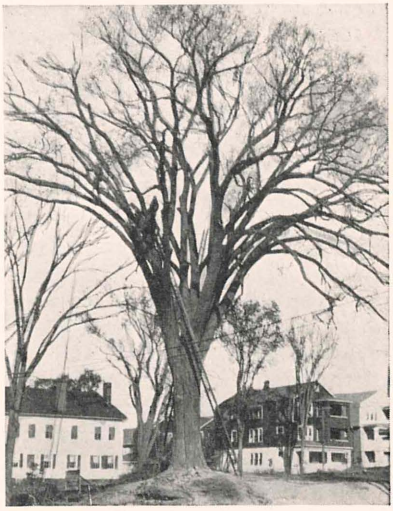
The pine stood on the road between Whigville and Polkville near Bristol, and tradition says that Asahel Mix, who lived near the tree and was a firm believer in the Millerite doctrine, climbed the tree in an ascension robe on that day in 1843 when the Lord was supposed to come. The facts were that in his ordinary clothes Mr. Mix climbed the tree to fix his well sweep which was attached to the tree by an iron rod and had gotten out of order.

Old Elms, Clinton.

Clinton is noted for its beautiful tree-lined main street. These elms are cared for by the local garden club. Two of the most beautiful, vase-shaped elms stand in front of the old Dibbell place at the corner of the old turnpike and the present busy thoroughfare.

**The Sweetheart Tree, Windsor.*

This elm was planted in the lane in front of the Benton Homestead by Anne Filley on the day before her marriage to Elihu Benton in 1785. There is but a stump of the tree remaining today.



**Witch Elm, Hartford.*

The Witch Elm stood on Albany Avenue between Garden and Irving Streets until 1930, when it was cut down. It is said to have marked the scene of the last hanging for witchcraft in Connecticut and is mentioned in a deed of March 11, 1711, when John Read sold a tract of seven acres to John Alcott.

**Charter Oak, Hartford.*

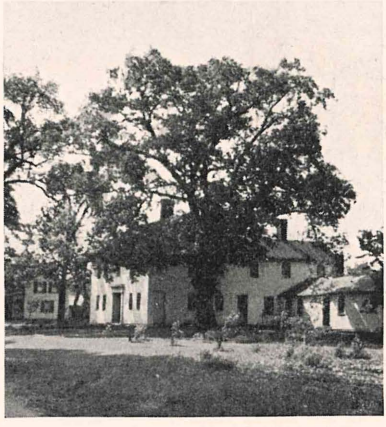
Connecticut's most famous tree was the Charter Oak which was a white oak saved, according to tradition, from the original forest in 1636 at the request of the Indians. It stood in front of the Governor Wyllys Mansion in Hartford which was built in 1638 and was the finest house in Connecticut. The Charter of the Connecticut Colony, granted by King Charles II in 1662, is supposed to have been hidden in the oak by a patriot when Sir Edmund Andros, at the command of King James II, demanded the Charter in 1687. The Charter served Connecticut as a Constitution from 1662 to 1818 and conveyed to the Colony all the land "from the said Narragansett Bay on the East to the South Sea on the West." The tree blew over in a storm in 1856. The hole which concealed the Charter had then enlarged enough to hold twenty-five men. Pieces of the wood were made into gavels, picture frames, and even chairs, one of which stands in the Senate at the State Capitol.

**Granger Maple, Suffield.*

This tree was planted in 1678 by Launcelot Granger who died in 1689. The tree was removed in 1925.

**Ledyard Elm, Hartford.*

The Ledyard Elm which stood south of the Lincoln Iron Works on Arch Street was planted in 1773 to commemorate the canoe trip of John Ledyard, "The Great American Traveller," from Dartmouth College in Hanover, New Hampshire, down the Connecticut River to Hartford. John Ledyard was born in Groton and went to live with his cousin, Governor Seymour, when he was nineteen. The property was deeded to Mr. Lincoln on condition that the tree should never be trimmed or cut down except by the Park Commissioners. It was destroyed sometime during the eighteen-nineties.



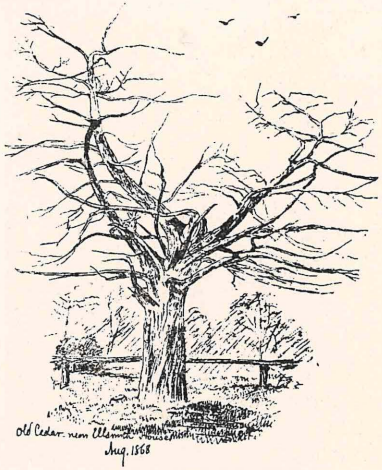
Hayden Oak, Windsor.

This oak has always been called a tree of the primeval forest. The house under it was built by Samuel Hayden in 1737 and has been lived in by successive generations of Haydens from that day to this. Sergeant Samuel Hayden kept a tavern in this house under the oak in Oliver Ellsworth's young manhood. Tradition says that he often

went up there to crack jokes with his fellow men and to eat apple pie. The tavern was less than a mile from the Ellsworth Homestead and on the direct road, in those days, to the settlements north of Windsor. This part of Windsor is called Haydens. It is recorded that in 1886 the oak measured four feet in diameter with a spread of branches of nearly ninety feet.

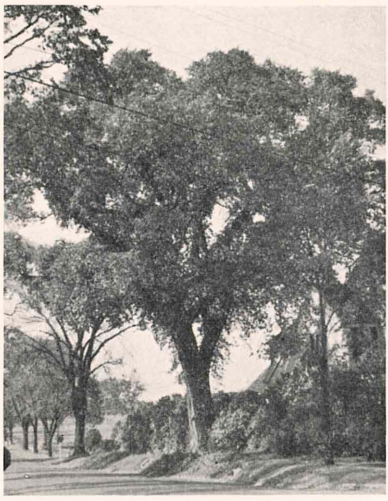
1812 *White Oak, East Glastonbury.*

This white oak, according to legend, was used as a target by the American soldiers in 1812 when they marched to New London and under it the Evangelist Whitfield preached. The tree stands on the New London Turnpike and has been owned by the Buck family for three generations. It has a circumference of eighteen feet, nine inches at the ground, and is estimated to be between three and four hundred years old.



**Old Hunting Tree, Windsor.*

"This ancient cedar, known as the 'Old Hunting Tree,' stood in the north front yard of the Oliver Ellsworth Homestead, Windsor, Connecticut, about halfway between the house and the highway. It was locally reputed to be the oldest tree in Connecticut and was known by the Indians as their Council Tree from time immemorial. After the whites came, respect for Indian tradition inspired its continued use as a gathering place for the more important conferences of the white settlers and Indians. In later years its more familiar name was acquired from its use as an assembly point for hunting parties. A pair of deer antlers were fixed high up in its branches until a few years before the tree fell, November, 1877." (Quoted, with the permission of the Historical Society of Windsor, from one of its publications. The picture is a copy of a scarce print, dated August, 1868.) The cedar had a girth of seven feet.



Bridal Elm, Wethersfield.

In Colonial days it was the custom for the bride-to-be to bring a tree from her father's home and plant it near her new home. Sarah Saltonstall came from New London to marry Daniel Buck just before the Connecticut River froze over and so was not able to bring a tree with her. The next spring as she was drawing water from her well, she saw an old Indian approaching and bearing a sapling in his hand. After some conversation in the sign language Sarah exchanged a quart of rum for the sapling which she planted by the well. This proud elm still stands today shading the house where Sarah and Daniel Buck lived in 1775.

Oliver Ellsworth Elms, Windsor (see frontispiece).

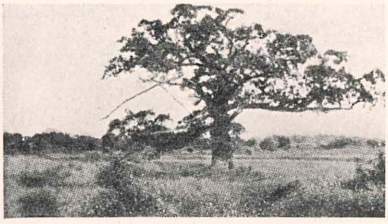
Oliver Ellsworth (1745–1807), one of the framers of the Constitution of the United States, was sent from Connecticut to the first United States Congress. There he wrote the Judiciary Act which is the basis of our Federal judiciary system today. Ellsworth was a friend of Washington who visited him in Windsor and who made him third Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States in 1796. John Adams sent him to France in 1799 on a special mission. The Ellsworth Homestead, built about 1740 on land bought by the Ellsworths in 1665, remained in the possession of the family until 1903 when all the descendants of Oliver Ellsworth presented the property to the Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution. The house was called Elmwood from the thirteen elms Oliver Ellsworth planted and named for the original colonies. Only two of the elms remain today.

**Mamoosun's Tree, Middletown.*

This sycamore, or buttonwood tree stood on the meadows north of the bridge and was estimated to be six hundred years old. Mamoosun the Young, the last of the descendants of the Proprietors, went to live with the Six Nations after he had sold his rights in lands at Chatham in 1749. He occasionally returned and slept in the hollow trunk of the sycamore. Another story is that he accidentally killed a tribesman and was closely pursued by the relatives of the dead man. He hid in the hollow trunk and his squaw fed him until he escaped to another tribe.

Black Cherry, Warehouse Point.

This tree is also on Mr. Hamilton's property and has a circumference of ten feet, three inches; a spread of fifty feet; and a height of seventy-three feet.



**Cedar Sentinel, Saybrook.*

This old cedar was located near the Boston Post Road in Old Saybrook and it was preserved as a landmark for three hundred years.

**Cemetery Elm, Middletown.*

The Middletown Burying Ground was laid out in 1650 on the banks of the Connecticut River. A large elm stood in the yard under which one or more Indian chiefs were buried. Tradition has it that the first sermon in Middletown was preached under this elm. The tree measured in 1832, at two and one half feet from the ground, twenty-six feet in circumference with a spread from north to south of one hundred and ten feet and from east to west of ninety-five feet. It was taken down in 1843 when its age was estimated, from measurements and from the rings, to be three hundred and twenty-five years. The tree was quite noted for its grandeur.

NEW LONDON COUNTY

**Lothrop Pine, Norwich.*

An unusually large pine stood near the house built by Samuel Lothrop, Jr., in 1679. He was a colonel at Louisburg and the tree stood as a reminder of him and of the house for many years after both were gone.

**Coit Elms, Norwich.*

Jabez Perkins, who lived on Sentry Hill, planted two young elms in front of the Coit House in 1754. Oliver Wendell Holmes, in his *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, mentions having received a "very pretty" letter telling about these elms with their spread of "one hundred twenty-seven feet from bough-end to bough-end." He writes: "What do you say to that? And gentle ladies beneath it, that love it and celebrate its praises! And that in a town of such supreme audacious Alpine loveliness as Norwich!" Girth of trees seventeen and thirteen feet.

**Boundary Oak, Norwich.*

This oak, on the property of Thomas Rose, was a southeastern boundary mark between Norwich and New London. It is referred to in several acts, patents, and surveys as standing on the line running from the head of Poquetannock Cove to the bounds of Stonington.

**Bean Hill Elm, Norwich.*

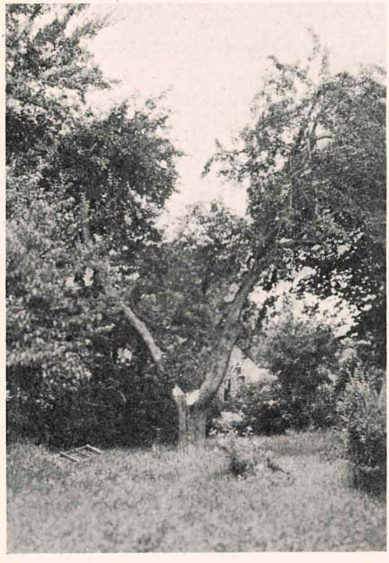
This elm, set out in 1729 to replace a decayed tree, was a noted landmark under which picnics were held, speeches made, and sermons preached, to say nothing of informal gatherings of all sorts.

**Liberty Tree, Norwich.*

This giant elm stood in front of Peck's Tavern and it is said that orators expressed from a platform in its branches the sentiments of the indignant colonists. After 1768 meals and drinks were served on this platform.

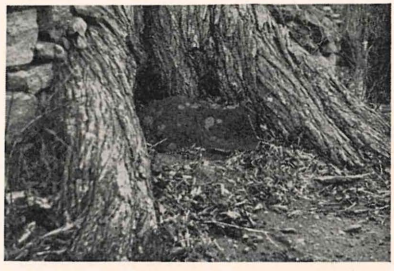
Larrabee Oak, Gales Ferry or Ledyard.

This tree was owned by Captain Adam Larrabee who was in the War of 1812. The farm remained in the Larrabee family for many years. It is supposed to be the largest white oak in Connecticut with its smallest girth nineteen and one half feet, its spread of one hundred and thirty-two feet, and a height of eighty-five feet.



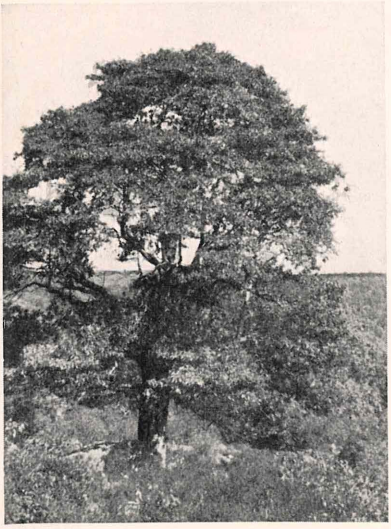
Winthrop Apple Tree, New London.

It is said that about 1650 Governor John Winthrop imported thirty-six apple trees which he distributed to the thirty-six families of New London "to plant and make a town of orchards." What is supposed to be the only one of these trees still living is in the back yard of the old Hempsted House which was built by Robert Hempsted in 1643 or 1645 and is now owned by Miss Anna Hempsted Branch, a direct descendant in the tenth generation. The variety of apple appears to be Roxbury Russet which, according to Beech's *Apples of New York*, is supposed to have been originated in Roxbury, Massachusetts, about 1640 and introduced into Connecticut in 1649 or soon thereafter! It is well known that Governor Winthrop made frequent trips between New London and Boston, and if we assume that the thirty-six trees were "imported" from Boston the facts and stories agree very closely.



Jasper Gray Elm, Hamburg.

This magnificent old elm stands on the property of Rutherford Pratt on the Hamburg Road. It has grown around a gravestone bearing the name Jasper Gray and the date 1728. Just who Jasper Gray was is not known but the tree as a sapling was evidently planted at or near the head of the grave and has grown around the stone.

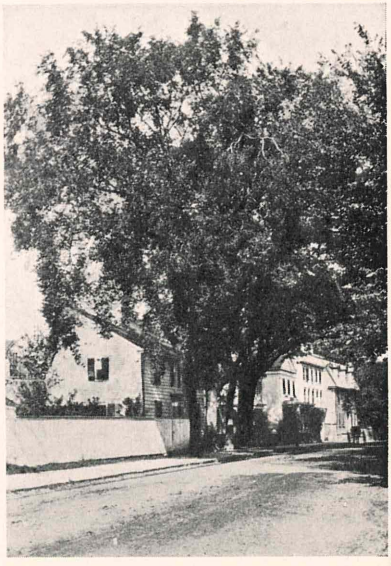


Lake Pataquanset Sassafras, East Lyme.

This tree has a height of forty-seven feet, a spread of thirty-seven feet, and a circumference of seven feet, seven inches, a very unusual size for a sassafras, which seldom grows larger than a shrub.

Bolleswood Hemlocks, New London.

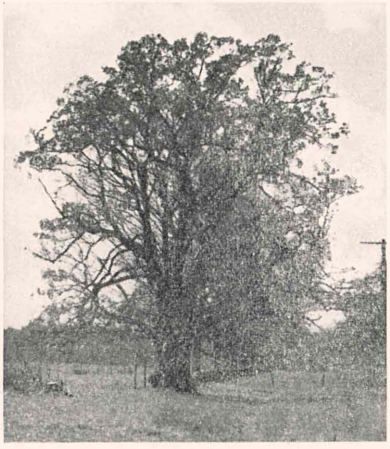
Bolleswood was deeded to Thomas Bolles of New London by Owaneco, Sachem of the Mohegan Indians, in 1693. It remained in the hands of descendants of Thomas Bolles until a short time ago when Miss Anna Hempsted Branch gave it to Connecticut College as a part of its Arboretum. It has remained practically untouched since the days when the Indians held council there and contains a grove of ancient hemlocks, some of which are four hundred and fifty years old. The original deed for the land has recently come into the possession of the College.



**The "Four Sisters Elms," New London.*

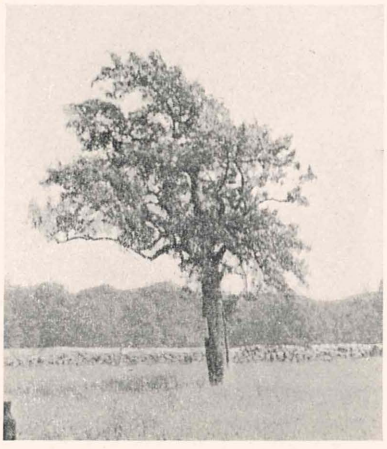
Brigadier General Burbeck, a captain of artillery in the Revolutionary War, purchased a house, built in 1735, at 32 Main Street about 1815 and it remained in the possession of his family for seventy-five years. Four noble elms stood in front of the house and were often called the "Four Sisters Elms." James Baxter, father of Dr. Bartholomew Baxter, a druggist, planted them in 1816 and named them Johanna, Catherine, Sophia, and Sarah, after his daughters.

TOLLAND COUNTY



Great White Oak, Hebron.

This tree, measuring twenty-seven feet at the base, is estimated to be from three to five hundred years old and in 1703 it doubtless saw the women from Windsor, who started out to find their husbands who had left weeks before, mount a gigantic boulder and scream with fear of the wolves. About one hundred years ago thirteen maple saplings symbolizing the thirteen original colonies were planted in a row to the left of the oak by David Gillette, owner of the property. In 1829 a bell for the new edifice of the First Congregational Church was sent to Middle Haddam Landing from Boston. Hebron men with yokes of oxen brought it from the Landing and, unable to restrain their eagerness to hear the bell, hung it over a branch of this oak. The oak heard the last peal of the bell when the church burned in 1882. The tree is still in a vigorous condition, showing no signs of decay.



Hale Pear Tree, South Coventry.

This tree, which is still bearing fruit, was planted about 1750 by Deacon Richard Hale, the father of Nathan Hale, the American spy who was hanged by the British on September 22, 1776. Hale was then only twenty-one years old.

**Hebron Elm, Hebron.*

This elm was set out by David Barber, a tavern keeper, in 1763 and for one hundred and forty-one years stood guard at the southern entrance to Hebron. The Rev. Samuel Peters, clad in his priestly robes on September 15, 1774, was taken from his home by a mob of "Liberty Boys" to the village Green where he was made to mount the horse block near the tree in front of David Barber's Tavern and renounce his Tory principles or suffer a coat of tar and feathers. It is said Washington passed the tree on his way to Lebanon. Bells were tolled when the tree was chopped down in 1904.

WINDHAM COUNTY

McClellan Elms, South Woodstock.

Mrs. Samuel McClellan brought four saplings from the old Windham homestead, two of which she planted in front of her house and the other two on the adjoining common. They are called "true trees of Liberty" as they are witnesses of the patriotism of the women of Windham County.

Giant Oak, West Ashford.

This oak was awarded the first prize as being the largest tree entered in the 1927 tree contest, having a circumference of thirty-two feet at one foot from the ground, and at four and one half feet, of twenty-one feet. Its horizontal branch spread is one hundred and thirty-five feet and its height, ninety-five feet.

Centennial Oak, South Woodstock.

This tree was planted at the one-hundredth birthday celebration of Benjamin Warner (1805–1905) at Lakeside.

Grant Elm, Woodstock.

President Grant planted this elm on July 4, 1870, on the lawn in front of the Woodstock Academy.

**Revolutionary Elm, East Woodstock.*

This elm stood in front of the house of Captain Elisha Child (1752–1798), who took his Company to Cambridge after the Lexington Alarm. The tree was planted in 1776 and was taken down in 1895.

English Oak, Bald Hill, Woodstock.

This tree grew from an acorn obtained in 1907 at Woodstock Park, Oxfordshire, the ancient seat of the Kings of England and since 1704, of the Dukes of Marlborough.

McKinley Elm, Woodstock.

This tree was planted in Roseland Park in 1891 in honor of William McKinley.

CONSTITUTIONAL OAKS

The Constitutional Oaks were presented by the late Senator Joseph R. Hawley of Hartford to each delegate of the Constitutional Convention of Connecticut in 1902. He requested the men to plant these trees in their respective towns as a reminder of the purposes of the Convention and of the friendships made during its sessions. In 1927, when the State Librarian, Mr. Godard, made inquiries regarding the fate of these one hundred and sixty-eight trees, he re-

ceived replies from one hundred and five towns indicating that sixty-nine trees were still living, while fourteen had died and twenty-two were unrecorded.

The oaks are not, as many supposed, seedlings of the Charter Oak for they are all red oaks, while the Charter Oak was a fine specimen of white oak.

It would be interesting to go into the story of each of these trees but space does not permit mention of more than two or three.

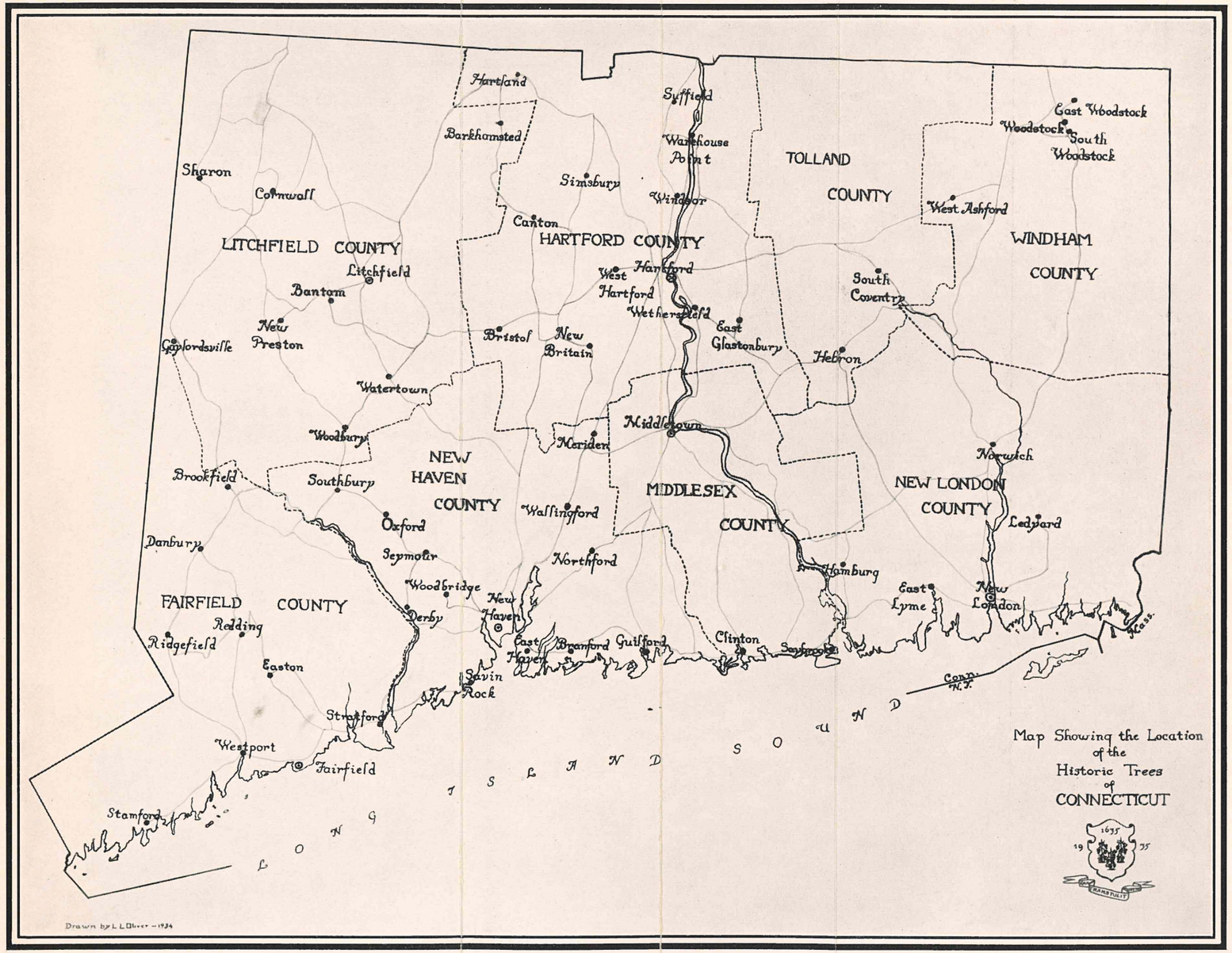
The oak belonging to Charles Hopkins Clark of Hartford has been transplanted to the State Library grounds where it stands near the flagpole by the northeast corner of the Library.

The Farmington oak was planted with much ceremony by President Theodore Roosevelt on October 22, 1902, and serves as a memorial both to William McKinley and to the growth of Connecticut into a strong state.

One Constitutional Oak is of particular interest to the Connecticut Daughters for it was planted by Cassia Williams Bailey, assisted by members of the Children of the American Revolution, and under the auspices of the Anna Warner Bailey Chapter, D.A.R., on the grounds of the Groton Monument.

The picture shown of the Litchfield tree gives an idea of what the trees are like as they stand in the following towns: Ansonia, Ashford, Avon, Barkhamsted, Bethlehem, Bloomfield, Branford, Bristol, Brooklyn, Canterbury,

Canton, Chester, Colchester, Columbia, Cornwall, Durham, Eastford, East Granby, East Haddam, East Hartford, East Windsor, Enfield, Essex, Fairfield, Farmington, Franklin, Glastonbury, Granby, Greenwich, Griswold, Groton, Hampton, Lebanon, Litchfield, Meriden, Middlebury, Morris, New Britain, New Haven, Newington, New London, North Branford, Old Saybrook, Oxford, Plainfield, Plymouth, Pomfret, Portland, Rocky Hill, Salem, Saybrook, Seymour, Simsbury, Somers, Southington, South Windsor, Suffield, Voluntown, Washington, Watertown, Westbrook, West Hartford, Wethersfield, Willington, Windsor, Windsor Locks, Wolcott, Woodbury, and Woodstock.


Hartland
Barkhamsted
Sharon
Cornwall
LITCHFIELD COUNTY
Litchfield
Bantam
New Preston
Goshenville
Watertown
Woodbury
Brookfield
Southbury
Danbury
Oxford
Seymour
Woodbridge
FAIRFIELD COUNTY
Redding
Ridgefield
Easton
Derby
Stratford
Westport
Fairfield
Stamford
Canton
Simsbury
Bristol
New Britain
Meriden
NEW HAVEN COUNTY
Wallingford
Northford
New Haven
East Haven
Branford
Guilford
Savin Rock
HARTFORD COUNTY
Suffield
Warehouse Point
Windsor
Hartford
West Hartford
Wethersfield
East Glastonbury
Middletown
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
Clinton
Saybrook
TOLLAND COUNTY
South Coventry
Hebron
Hamburg
East Lyme
WINDHAM COUNTY
East Woodstock
Woodstock
South Woodstock
West Ashford
NEW LONDON COUNTY
Norwich
Ledyard
New London
Conn.
N.Y.
LONG ISLAND SOUND
Drawn by L. L. Oliver – 1934
Map Showing the Location of the Historic Trees of CONNECTICUT
1635
1935
QUINNETUKUT